



The Rail Gunner Weekly

41st Fires Brigade



1-21 FA



2-20 FA



589th BSB



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Rail Gunner Weekly Staff

Commander

Col. Richard M. Francey Jr.

Command Sergeant Major

Command Sgt. Maj. Kelvin A. Hughes

Rail Gunner PAO OIC

1st Lt. Tanyia Bryant

Rail Gunner PAO NCOIC

Sgt. 1st Class Joe Thompson

Page Designer/Staff Writer

Sgt. Allison Churchill



41st Fires Brigade

Rail Gunners!

www.41stfiresbrigade.com

Rail Gunner PAO

SFC Joe Thompson

FOB Delta

APD AE 09317

DSN: 314-844-2716

E-mail:

joe.thompson@iraq.centcom.mil

JSS Mutanabe now in IA's hands



Capt. Adam Ropelewski, commander, Btry. B, 2nd Bn., 20th FA Regt., gives the symbolic key to the JSS to Capt. 'Ali Abdul Zaharra Hussain, 4th Co., 3rd Bn, 32nd IA Bde., at the JSS Mutanabe transfer ceremony May 28.

By Sgt. 1st Class Joe Thompson, 41st Fires Bde. PAO

By Sgt. 1st Class Joe Thompson
41st Fires Bde. PAO

U.S. Forces handed over the responsibility of Joint Security Station Mutanabe, near Jassan in Wasit Province, Iraq, to the Iraqi Army in a ceremony May 28.

Capt. Adam Ropelewski, Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery Regiment, 41st Fires Brigade signed over the JSS to Capt. 'Ali Abdul Zaharra Hussain, 4th Company, 3rd Battalion, 32nd Iraqi Army Brigade.

"The U.S. Forces leaving this base are giving the opportunity to the Iraqi Forces and the 4th company to take their place and to take complete control of this base which indicates a new era for the Iraqi Armed Forces," said Lt. Col. Majid, 3rd Bn., 32nd IA Bde., commander.

"This also indicates the strength of the Iraqi Army in fighting the terrorists and the people who cause harm to this country and we thank the American Forces for all their efforts at this base," added Majid in his speech during the ceremony.

The Soldiers of Btry. B took over control of the JSS in August 2008 after the Georgian Army pulled out of Iraq to help with the crisis in their own country.

"Today ten months later, we depart not as strangers but as brothers. Through ten months of living together, training together and operating together we are not two armies, but we are one team who have provided security and stability to the people of Badra district," said Lt. Col. Timothy Bush, 2nd Bn., 20th FA Regt., commander.

"We are leaving the JSS in accordance with the security agreement, but we will never step away from our friends and we will stand shoulder-to-shoulder with you against our common enemies," added Bush.

JSS Mutanabe is located approximately 25 kilometers from the point-of-entry into Iraq from Iran and according to 41st Fires Bde., commander, the Iraqi Security Forces have done a good job at maintaining the security in the area.

"I don't see it as being all that dangerous, we have made a lot of progress; I think the people are getting back out, back into a normal life and it's due to the great Iraqi Security Forces," said Col. Dick Francey. "Whenever the bad people stick their heads out, they are crushed very quickly."

The remaining two joint security stations that 2nd Bn., 20th FA Regt., have Soldiers partnered with Iraqi Security Forces are scheduled to be handed over within the next month.

Teams compete in Memorial Day celebration

Photos by Sgt. Allison Churchill
41st Fires Bde. PAO



Top left: Sgt. James Lopiccolo, of Inverness, Fla., team leader, Battery C, 1st Battalion, 21st Field Artillery Regiment, takes the baton from Sgt. Alex Solis, of San Diego, personal security detachment, Btry C, 1-21 FA, in a relay that kicked off Memorial Day celebrations on May 29. Lopiccolo and Solis's team, the Dust Devils, which also included Capt. Robert Plowey, of Pittsburgh, commander of Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 41st Fires Bde.; Capt. Robin Ernstrom, of Montville, N.J., resource management officer, 41st Fires Bde.; and Capt. Tommy Karpuk, Iraqi Security Forces liaison, 41st Fires Bde., won the relay with a time of 17 minutes, 11 seconds.



Top right: Soldiers from 772nd Military Police Company, in jerseys, and Btry A, 1-77 FA, watch to see if a shot by the MPs sinks in. It did, but the Btry A team went on to win third place in the championship.



Middle: Staff Sgt. Timothy Peters, of Syracuse, N.Y., 41st Fires Bde. command group personal security team, runs for home in a kickball game between the PSD and 324th Network Support Company. The PSD took first place in the tournament.

Bottom left: The 589th Brigade Support Battalion, 41st Fires Bde., volleyball team sends a ball over to the KBR employee team. The Iron Caisson team won first place in the tournament, out of nearly 20 teams.

Bottom right: Sgt. Brenda Busherra, 34th Infantry Division rock band, Center Mass, sings during lunch at the Memorial Day Celebration, held at and around the Morale, Welfare and Recreation Center.



34ID rock band entertains FOB Delta



Left: Chief Warrant Officer 2 Tom Strazza, of Stony Brook, N.Y., targeting officer, 41st Fires Brigade, jams with Sgt. Brenda Busherra, 34th Infantry Division rock band, Center Mass, during The Ramones' "Sheena is a Punk Rocker" during a concert at the Morale, Welfare and Recreation Stage May 30.

Above: Capt. Tommy Karpuk (middle), of Sioux City, Iowa, Iraqi Security Forces liaison, 41st Fires Bde., fills the audience's need for "more cowbell" during Pink's "U + Ur Hand." Both Strazza and Karpuk were pulled to the stage from the bleachers after placing song requests.

Photos by Sgt. Allison Churchill, 41st Fires Bde. PAO

Re-enlistment



Staff Sgt. Matthew Wilson, of Hugheston, W.Va., 41st Fires Brigade command group personal security team, re-enlists for three years and the opportunity to be an instructor at the Military Intelligence School at Fort Huachuca, Ariz. Wilson also celebrated his graduation from Excelsior College, from which he earned a bachelor's degree. Brigade commander Col. Dick Francey administered the oath.

*Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Joe Thompson
41st Fires Bde. PAO*

Worship Opportunities Sunday

| | |
|-------------------------|------|
| <i>Chapel 1</i> | |
| Traditional Protestant | 0900 |
| Latter-day Saints | 1030 |
| Gospel Service | 1300 |
| Reconciliation service | 1830 |
| Catholic Mass (English) | 1930 |

Monday

| | |
|-----------------|------|
| <i>Chapel 1</i> | |
| Catholic Mass | 0800 |

Tuesday

| | |
|-------------------|------|
| <i>Mayor Cell</i> | |
| Bible Study | 1930 |
| <i>Chapel 1</i> | |
| Bible Study | 2000 |

Thursday

| | |
|-------------|------|
| <i>TMC</i> | |
| Bible Study | 1930 |

Saturday

| | |
|-----------------------|------|
| <i>Chapel 1</i> | |
| Catholic Mass | 0800 |
| Christian Movie Night | 2000 |

Soldiers battle for 'Strongest Man' bragging rights

Photos by Sgt. Allison Churchill
41st Fires Bde. PAO



Top left: Sgt. Billy Marsh, 41st Fires Bde., competes in the "Gator Hold" event of the "Strongest Man" competition, held May 29 as part of the Memorial Day festivities. The competition consisted of seven events, with each place holding points. Marsh's point accumulation earned him first place in the 175 pounds and under weight class.

Top middle: Chief Warrant Officer 3 Scott Sauer, 1-150th Assault Helicopter Battalion, lifts 40 pound concrete balls onto trash cans. The timed event took careful lifting to complete without injury. Sauer won first place in the 224 pounds and below weight class.

Top right: Sgt. Troy Turcotte, 41st Fires Bde., "drives" a tire through a course as part of the "Strongest Man" competition. Turcotte went on to win first place in the 200 pounds and below weight class.

Left: Spc. Rick Morris, Battery A, 1st Battalion, 77th Field Artillery Regiment, pulls a Humvee over the 100 feet line during the Humvee pull, the event that kicked off the competition. Morris won first place in the 226 pounds and above weight class.

Bottom left: Air Force Staff Sgt. Chancellor Thompson, 41st Fires Bde., who came in third place in the 200 pounds and below weight class, pulls the Humvee with a smile.

Bottom right: 1st Lt. Nicholas Albini, Btry. B, 2-20 FA, who came in second in the 200 pounds and below weight class, competes in the Gator hold.



Oakland Raiderettes visit, perform for troops



Top left: Meena of the Oakland Raiderettes leads her four other tour mates and several Soldiers in an abdominal workout on the Morale, Welfare and Recreation Stage May 30. The Raiderettes also led select audience members in push-up and dance contests.

Top right: Fans of the Oakland Raiders and cheerleaders cheer on the Raiderettes.

Bottom left: The Raiderettes listen as Emily reads letters given to the cheerleaders to give to the Soldiers.

Photos by Sgt. Allison Churchill, 41st Fires Bde. PAO

Left: Emily, Ashlee and Meena of the Oakland Raiderettes pose in a Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle with Pfc. Geoffery Hatten, of Clarksville, Tenn., and Sgt. Shane Weiser, of Philadelphia, both members of the 41st Fires Brigade personal security team, in front of the brigade headquarters May 30.

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Joe Thompson, 41st Fires Bde. PAO

Happy Birthday!

Capt. Hayder Adnand Ali Al-Saidy blows the candles out on his surprise birthday cake May 28 in the 41st Fires Brigade headquarters conference room. Hayder has been a liaison between the brigade and the Iraqi Police since the beginning of the brigade's deployment.

*Photo by
Sgt. 1st Class Joe Thompson
41st Fires Bde. PAO*



In last week's RGW, Spc. Joon Kim was incorrectly listed as Spc. Noel Kim. We regret the error.